



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MISSOURI  
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**2020 Vehicle Stops Report Changes Summary**

*Background and Purpose*

The 2018 Vehicle Stops Report (VSR) marked 18 years of annual reporting on vehicle stops in Missouri. During this time, only limited changes were made to the VSR, the most notable being the addition of the residency question for the 2018 report. Nearly two decades of reporting and input from stakeholders have revealed areas of needed improvement in the VSR. Beginning in the 2020 reporting year, the Attorney General's Office will be implementing changes to the VSR that will allow better analysis with the hope of driving more informed dialogue surrounding the report.

*VSR Form Changes*

**New Questions:** Three new questions will help capture more detailed traffic stop dynamics that have previously been out of reach.

- **Officer Assignment:** Officers' behavior, objectives, and constituent population change based upon their assignment. For example, a traffic enforcement unit will behave differently and handle a different population and area than a gang, drug, or gun taskforce. This question will capture that dynamic for analysis.
- **Driver Residential Zip Code:** Resident populations are used to benchmark traffic stop racial/ethnic compositions in the VSR. However, resident population can be significantly different from the driving population in an area. Driver residential zip codes will allow more realistic benchmarks based on likely commuter populations. This change will be possible through the voluntary collection of disaggregated data described below.
- **Citation/Warning Reason:** While the reason for an arrest has long been recorded in the VSR, reasons for citations and warnings have not been. This question will provide insight into citation/warning dynamics and patterns across the state.

**Expanded Response Options:** Similar to the new questions, adjustments to existing response options will better capture the realities of traffic stops and allow for better analysis.

- **Investigative Stop Subcategories:** The level of discretion officers have is an important concept for the VSR. An investigative traffic stop is a powerful proactive policing tool that is inherently discretionary. However, different types of investigative stops have varying levels of discretion with some allowing very little discretion by officers. Sub-types of investigatory stops replaced sub-types of moving violations to better see the differences in discretion among the various types of investigatory stops.
- **Expanded Age Range Categories:** The addition of an extra age range category will allow improved analysis of the dynamics between driver age and traffic stops.

- Alcohol Contraband Hit: Alcohol-related stops can be significantly different from drug-related stops, so separating alcohol from other drugs will prevent the mixing of those two types of stops.

**Quality of Life Adjustments**: Changes to the VSR form to make it more intuitive for officers and reduce the time necessary to complete it.

- Question Consolidation: Previously, officers had to fill out multiple questions to document the result of a traffic stop. A single question will now include all possibilities.
- Question Reordering: Questions have been reordered for improved logical flow as officers complete the form.
- Reworded Questions: Language adjustments to some questions and responses will make completing the form more efficient for officers in the field.

### *VSR Data Collection Process and Methodology Guidance*

#### **Disaggregated Data Submission Option**

Historically, law enforcement agencies have reported their traffic stop statistics to the Attorney General's Office by aggregating or summing their traffic stops according to racial/ethnic categories and then submitting them to our office. This aggregation prevents in-depth multi-variate analysis of traffic stop dynamics, leaving race the only variable that can be examined. For example, it has not been possible to look at traffic stops to see how patterns change for various combinations of race, age, and gender or to see how outstanding warrants affect the arrest rate.

Starting with the 2019 reporting period, the Attorney General's Office will begin accepting voluntary submissions of disaggregated data from law enforcement agencies. These agencies' data will be used to conduct previously impossible analysis. For example, agencies that submit disaggregated data will be able to use the new zip code question to construct better benchmarks for comparison against their traffic stop statistics. Another example would be the ability to filter outstanding warrant arrests from arrest rate calculations since they are low-discretion situations. These agencies will be able to achieve a much more nuanced understanding of their traffic stop patterns, fundamentally improving the VSR.

#### **Methodology Guidance for Officers and IT Vendors**

Historically, instructions for the VSR have been limited to the language on the VSR form itself and in the Code of State Regulations. However, many law enforcement agencies use their Records Management Systems (RMSs) to collect information necessary for the VSR alongside officers' other reports, so many officers never see the actual VSR form. This has created varying methodologies across law enforcement agencies and leaves many officers without uniform instruction on how to complete the form.

To remedy this, the Attorney General's Office is working to develop guidance for officers and the IT vendors with whom they work to develop uniform methodology for the VSR across the state and clarify how to handle scenarios that do not fit cleanly into the VSR's structure.

**VEHICLE STOP INFORMATION**DATE mm / dd / yr TIME                      (military)

- 1 OFFICER ASSIGNMENT** (Time of Stop) ☐ General Patrol  
☐ Dedicated Traffic Enforcement ☐ Special Assignment

**2 LOCATION OF STOP**

- ☐ Interstate Highway ☐ U.S. Highway ☐ State Highway  
☐ County Road ☐ City Street ☐ Other

**3 VIOLATION RESULTING IN STOP** (✓ all that apply)

- ☐ Moving ☐ Equipment ☐ License/Registration ☐ Investigative

If an "investigative" violation, ✓ category of violation.

- ☐ Call for Service ☐ Officer Initiative  
☐ Detective or Crime Bulletin ☐ Other

**4 DRIVER'S RACE/MINORITY STATUS** (based **only** on visual observation **after** stop)

- ☐ White ☐ African-American/Black ☐ Hispanic/Latino  
☐ American Indian/Alaska Native ☐ Asian ☐ Other

**5 DRIVER'S AGE**

- ☐ Under 18 ☐ 18-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-64 ☐ 65+

**6 DRIVER'S GENDER** ☐ Male ☐ Female**7 ZIP CODE OF DRIVER'S CURRENT RESIDENCE**                     **8 IS DRIVER A RESIDENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY'S JURISDICTION?** ☐ Yes ☐ No**9 WAS A SEARCH INITIATED?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

If YES, probable cause/authority for search. ✓ all that apply.

- ☐ Consent ☐ Reasonable suspicion-weapon (terry stop)  
☐ Incident to arrest ☐ Plain View Contraband ☐ Other  
☐ Drug Dog Alert ☐ Inventory ☐ Drug/Alcohol Odor

**10 WHAT WAS SEARCHED?**

- ☐ Driver Only ☐ Property Only ☐ Driver and Property

**11 DURATION OF SEARCH**

- ☐ 0-15 minutes ☐ 16-30 minutes ☐ 31+ minutes

**12 WAS CONTRABAND DISCOVERED?** ☐ Yes ☐ No

If YES, type of contraband. ✓ all that apply.

- ☐ Drugs/Paraphernalia ☐ Alcohol ☐ Currency  
☐ Weapon ☐ Stolen Property ☐ Other

**13 RESULT OF STOP**

- ☐ Citation ☐ Warning ☐ Custodial Arrest ☐ No action ☐ Other

**14 IF CITATION OR WARNING ISSUED, VIOLATION ALLEGED**

- ☐ Moving ☐ Equipment ☐ License/Registration

**15 IF ARREST MADE, CRIME/VIOLATION ALLEGED** (✓ all that apply)

- ☐ Outstanding Warrant ☐ Offense against person  
☐ Resisting Arrest ☐ Drug Violation ☐ DWI/BAC  
☐ Property Crime ☐ Traffic Violation ☐ Other

Modified June 2019

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Modified June 2019

## VEHICLE STOP INFORMATION

DATE    TIME   ☐ AM ☐ PM  
MM DD YY

### 1 VIOLATION RESULTING IN STOP (✓ all that apply)

☐ Moving ☐ Equipment ☐ License ☐ Investigative

If a "moving" violation, ✓ category of violation.

☐ Speed ☐ Lane Violation ☐ Follow too close  
☐ CVE ☐ Fail to Signal ☐ Other Moving Violation

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Modified April 2019

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